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WORLD-POLITICS.

LONDON; ST. PETERSBURG; PARIS; ROME; WASHINGTON.

LONDON, *January, 1908.*

LOOKING back over the conduct of their domestic and foreign affairs during the past year, Englishmen find little cause for dissatisfaction. It has been throughout Europe, and, indeed, throughout the world, a year of appeasement and settling down. The international temperature is lower than it was twelve months ago; is, in fact, almost normal. Great Britain has been well to the front in a period of unusual and nearly universal *rapprochements*. Her traders in the Far East are beginning to suffer severely from Japanese competition; but the Anglo-Japanese Alliance remains as steady as a rock and, within the last few months, has been officially recognized both by Russia and by France as the basis of Far Eastern peace. The Anglo-French *entente*, which is the pivot of Great Britain's European policy, adds something with each month that passes to its efficacy and steadfastness. With the United States, with Spain, Portugal, Italy and Austria-Hungary, this country has succeeded in maintaining and even strengthening its many bonds of popular and political sympathy. But 1907 will be memorable above all things in the British calendar for the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement and for the cessation of the Anglo-German war of words. The British people have been exhorted by I know not how many experts to regard the Anglo-Russian Agreement as a needless sacrifice of British interests in Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet; and it is, in my judgment, the fact that, if that Agreement stood by itself and could be considered apart from its reflex influence on British policy in other quarters of the world, Sir Edward Grey would be held to have had considerably the worst of the bargain. But in politics, in international politics especially, nothing stands alone; and in this particular case the

guidance of the experts, with their narrow, localized standpoint, has proved less trustworthy than the common-sense instincts of the uninstructed masses. The British people in general are unreservedly glad that the era of suspicion and pin-pricks in Anglo-Russian relations should now be closed. The events of the last few years, the Morocco affair especially, have taught them that it is not a British interest that Russia should be disabled from making her weight felt in the balance of European power. They are delighted that their new-formed friendship with France should now be extended to include the ally of France. They believe, with Sir Edward Grey, that half the difficulties of diplomacy vanish when two Powers approach each other with sentiments of mutual good-will; and if the Anglo-Russian Agreement has contributed to this result they hold it to be well worth a few minor sacrifices.

In regard to Germany the situation, politically and psychologically, is somewhat more complex. There is but one feeling of relief and satisfaction among Englishmen that King Edward and the Kaiser should have found themselves able to resume their personal relations. The results of the Imperial meetings at Wilhelmshöhe last August, and of the Kaiser's prolonged visit to England in November, have been a sensible improvement in the attitude of the two peoples towards one another. For almost the first time in a decade, the British and German newspapers are ceasing to scowl and gird. There is a lull in the tornado of accusations, abuse and recriminations, and a general desire on both sides of the North Sea for a return to sanity. Anglo-German relations are at last being debated without passion and without discourtesy. That is admittedly a great gain. But to discuss unpleasant facts with politeness is not to make them more palatable; and it is being borne in upon Englishmen that there are many facts in Anglo-German relations which cannot be conjured away by smooth words. The chief of these facts is the growth of the German Navy. The new naval programme now under discussion in the Reichstag has opened the eyes of all Englishmen to the conviction that a great crisis lies ahead of them. Dependent for her very existence upon supremacy at sea, Great Britain sees across the North Sea the steady fashioning of a navy which is unlikely, it is true, ever to equal her own, but which must in time come to hold the balance of European sea

power, and which must also make it well-nigh impossible for the British purse to stand indefinitely the strain of the two-Power standard. How far English apprehensions are aroused may be judged from the fact that Mr. W. T. Stead, one of the most ardent of the anti-jingoes, has called upon the Government to lay down two "Dreadnoughts" for every one laid down by Germany. The feeling is biting into Englishmen that the policy of naval construction pursued during the next decade will be big with the fate of the Empire itself.

One other issue of transcendent moment has also emerged during the past year. It affects Great Britain and the British Empire more nearly than any other Power, but it does not affect them alone. I refer, of course, to the relations that are to obtain between the white and colored peoples. The anti-Japanese explosion in British Columbia, the refusal of both Australia and New Zealand to open their sparsely settled territories to Asiatic immigrants, the expulsion of Hindus from Canada, and the steps now being taken by the Transvaal to get rid of the Indians who have flocked over the border from Natal, raise problems which both in themselves and in their influence upon the course of British foreign and Imperial policy deserve the best thought and forethought that the Government can give them. In matters of such intricacy and magnitude, public opinion takes long to crystallize; but I notice the growth of a disposition to consider the suggestion put forward in these letters some months ago—that the first step towards the solution of the question should be a conference between Great Britain, China and Japan.

In domestic politics, the past year has been comparatively uneventful. The Liberals have held their own and start on the new year with a majority virtually undiminished and with few signs that they have yet lost, or are about to lose, the favor of the country. They have passed two admirable measures, one remodelling the organization of the army and the other providing small holdings for agricultural labors. Mr. Asquith's Budget contained two features that redeemed it from the commonplace. One was the setting aside of over two million pounds as a nucleus for an old-age pension fund. The other was the introduction, for the first time in British financial history, of a distinction between earned and unearned income for the purposes of income-tax assessment. The Government also presided

over the Colonial Conference with more success than its opponents have been willing to allow. It could not, indeed, entertain the idea of Colonial preference in fiscal matters, but it made provision for a common system of Imperial defence, it agreed to the organization of an Imperial Secretariat inside the Colonial Office for the special study and elucidation of Imperial subjects, and it took a long step towards the development of steamship communications between the various parts of the Empire. Indeed, both in their Colonial policy and in their handling of a delicate but by no means desperate situation in India, the Liberals have scored unlooked-for successes, the grant of self-government to the Transvaal being in itself a stroke of the finest statesmanship. It is only in Ireland that they have so far conspicuously failed. Mr. Birrell's Devolution Bill, after its rejection by the Nationalists, was withdrawn; the Irish University Bill, outlined by Mr. Bryce just before he sailed for the United States, aroused such an intensity of opposition that it was not even introduced; and Mr. Birrell's actions and speeches in regard to the epidemic of cattle-driving have not impressed English opinion as those of a statesman of firmness and insight. I do not myself endorse this judgment, believing that Mr. Birrell has nearly all the qualities that an Irish Secretary ought to have, and feeling confident that he will yet leave a deep and beneficent mark on the statute-book. Another venture which has also turned out badly is the Government's campaign against the House of Lords. Except perhaps in Scotland, where some excitement was aroused by the rejection of two Scottish Bills in the Upper Chamber, the response to the Prime Minister's call to arms has been inadequate. The issue, however, having been once raised, will have to be fought out: the Bills rejected by the Lords are to be sent back to them during the coming session; and the next general election will almost certainly turn on the relations that are to subsist between the two Houses.

On the whole, the Liberals have good reason to be satisfied with their present position and prospects. They have undertaken to tackle some highly difficult and complicated questions—the licensing question for one, Irish University education for another, English education for a third, and old-age pensions for a fourth—and they are greatly harassed by the pressure of the Labor and Socialist men in the rear and by the shrewd tactics

which these new political forces are adopting in the constituencies. Nevertheless, they are in a far happier state than their opponents, who, besides being a hopeless minority in the House of Commons, have rather lost ground than gained it in the country, and in spite of repeated demonstrations of unity are still almost as much divided as ever on the fiscal issue. The only party, indeed, that is completely contented with itself and feels that the future is its own is the Socialist party. The year that has just closed will always be remembered in English politics as the year in which Socialism, as a definitive and organized political force, first made its appearance in the House of Commons. Socialism has been the great debating topic of the year, and the Socialist campaign in the constituencies has been prosecuted with quite unexampled vigor. But how far the doctrines of Socialism, whether in their stiff Marxian garb or in the more flexible robes of the "Revisionists," have laid hold of the minds of the English masses, it is extremely difficult to decide. From many points of view, there is no country in which Socialism would seem to stand a poorer chance than in England. There is comparatively little of the class spirit here; the English working-man has none of the ferocity of the French proletariat against the black-coated *bourgeoisie*; the lines of separation between the various grades of English society are wavering, coalescent, easily crossed and recrossed; there is no privileged military caste to domineer over all who are outside its ranks; there is no fiscal system setting the country against the town and exploiting the many for the few; the tradition of individualism is still enormously strong and pervasive; the British disdain for theories, for large views and for logical conclusions, and the British instinct for compromise are very far from being exhausted; and the strength of trade-unionism, the vigor and adaptability of English Liberalism, and the fact that the work of social reform has always in Great Britain gone on continuously, are still further obstacles in the path of Socialism, and render it extremely unlikely that it will ever acquire the position and influence it has won in France and Germany.

What is unquestionable, however, is that all sections of the Labor party, whether they are Socialists or not, are gradually coming together on a platform of advanced social reform. Their programme goes very much further than the present Cabinet is

prepared to advance. But it is characteristic of the confusion into which English politics are descending that a large section of the Unionists applaud the Socialists and even seek to outbid the Liberals for their favor. Indeed, the only true Conservatives left in Great Britain nowadays are the Unionist Free-Traders, who, being alienated from their own party by the fiscal question and from the Liberals by the semi-socialistic measures and leanings of the present Government, are relapsing, under the guidance of the "*Spectator*," into a state of mind on the subject of social reforms that was antiquated twenty years ago, and has been incredible ever since. In their belief, the Unionist party ought to shelve the question of Tariff Reform and concentrate all its forces against any proposals that smack of Socialism. This, however, is very far from being the view of the Tariff Reformers, who constitute the majority in the Unionist ranks. According to them, all who desire social reform must also desire tariff reform, because tariff reform alone can supply the necessary funds for social reform. The Liberals, they argue, will soon disappoint the masses by the inability of "*Cobdenite finance*" to find the money for old-age pensions and similar experiments. Then will come the great chance of the Chamberlainites to offer social reform in return for tariff reform. The expectation is not impossible of fulfilment, and a union between those who advocate social reform at any price and those who advocate tariff reform at any price is more than conceivable.

Many new Acts came into force on the first day of the new year. The most important of these, and the one from which the most is hoped, is the Small Holdings Act, giving County Councils the power compulsorily to acquire land to be let as small holdings. Another Act, called the Probation of Offenders Act, marks the first introduction into England of a principle that is already familiar in America—the principle of releasing offenders in certain cases on probation, binding them over to good behavior, with or without sureties, for a period not exceeding three years, and appointing probation officers, who may be women, to observe their conduct and "*advise, assist and befriend them.*" A third Act provides for the appointment of a public trustee who is qualified to undertake, for a small fee, all the duties of an ordinary trustee, with the added advantage of being permanent and backed by the Consolidated Funds.

ST. PETERSBURG, *January, 1908.*

CONTRARY to wont, this letter will touch upon a question of international interest—the commercial rivalry between Japan and the other Great Powers—the full significance of which is certain to be thoroughly grasped, if not to-day, then within the next five years. In some ears these words may sound like mere guesswork. So, too, did the definite foreshadowing of a Russian Constitution made in these pages thirty months ago, when the State was still an absolute monarchy. In June, 1905, the following forecast appeared in this REVIEW: “For Russia the destruction of her fleet means the close of the autocratic epoch and the beginning of a reign of democracy. One-man rule is now virtually dead.” Less than six months later, the autocratic fabric had been pulled down, and at present parliamentary institutions are slowly growing up among its ruins. And as it has been with the forecast of the internal situation, so it will probably be with my present presentiment that serious international complications will result from the commercial strivings of Japan.

Nippon's commercial policy in the Far East may well seem to most readers of this REVIEW a matter devoid of actuality. They may argue that Japan cannot shut the Open Door in the face of the whole world and that, if that contingency be eliminated, no other danger is formidable. But if they will assume for a moment that Japan's commercial designs in the Far East may in truth be fraught with importance to the world, the following considerations will probably harden that assumption into a firm conviction and show that a new and unlooked-for turn is being given to the policy of the nations interested in the Far East by the Russo-Japanese Commercial Agreement.

In the course of the negotiations between the two Powers which were carried on for nearly a twelvemonth in St. Petersburg, M. Motono, the Mikado's Minister, made, and M. Izvolsky, the Tsar's Foreign Secretary, assented to, a novel demand which, had its ulterior trend been discernible, might have caused the diplomatic world to prick its ears and rub its eyes. For it is an unmistakable token of the new spirit that is now moving over the face of the Pacific waters, and it warrants the belief that a fresh political tenet is being fashioned which may, if it win recognition, secure for the people of Nippon a privi-

leged commercial status in extensive regions of the Far East. It consists of a claim advanced by the Mikado's Government to bestow upon and accept from "*Corea and the countries contiguous to Japan in eastern Asia situated to the east of the Straits of Malacca*" special commercial concessions to which no other Powers, despite their right to the treatment of the most favored nation, shall be entitled.

This claim has already been allowed by Russia; and Japan confidently expects that it will be likewise acknowledged by the United States, Great Britain and the other nations. The innovation came about in this way. The two contracting parties agreed to grant to each other what is known as the most-favored-nation treatment. That is to say, over and above the special tariff concessions and other commercial facilities reciprocally and expressly accorded, they affirmed their willingness to extend to each other the facilities which they have already bestowed, or may hereafter bestow, upon other friendly Powers. Thus, if Russia is expressly obtaining low duties, say, on her rye entering Japan, she would also implicitly, in virtue of the most-favored-nation treatment, enjoy the benefit of the favorable tariff on wheat conceded by Japan, say, to the United States, and on tallow granted, it might be, to the Argentine Republic. To confer these rights upon friendly nations is nowadays the custom. But it is also usual to add a restrictive qualification eliminating from the most-favored-nation clause those special concessions—sometimes mere border facilities for traffic—which are common between, and confined to, neighboring countries. Thus, for instance, the privilege of navigating the Danube in Austrian territory which Austria might allow to Bavaria would, of course, not be shared by Russia, despite her undoubted right in Austria to the most-favored-nation treatment. Well, this restrictive stipulation, which always qualifies the most-favored-nation clause in Russian commercial treaties, was omitted in the Japanese draft of the new commercial agreement. The Russian plenipotentiaries, assuming that the omission was due to an oversight, asked to have the lacking clauses inserted.

M. Motono assented to this, but conditionally. He would add the clause, he said, provided that the same stipulation be applied to kindred privileges which Japan may accord to and receive from her neighbors. "Her neighbors?" the Russians ex-

claimed. "Yes. Why should an island State be deemed neighborless and debarred from the enjoyment of the valuable commercial and political privileges which continental Powers vindicate for themselves?" "And who are your neighbors?" one can imagine the Russian statesman inquiring of his Japanese colleague. "Our neighbors," was the reply, "are the nations and the peoples living to the east of the Straits of Malacca; the Chinese, the Siamese, the Coreans and the inhabitants of Cochin-China." Truly, a formidable array of peoples and a vast expanse of territory. As M. Motono's proposal was accepted, these millions of Orientals, with their great and increasing purchasing powers, may be enabled to trade with Japan on terms calculated to baffle the most vigorous attempts at competition. Heretofore, Japan enjoyed some natural advantages over her trade rivals in the Far Eastern markets: she is on the spot; she is well acquainted with the peoples of the Far East and their needs, and it is in her power to purchase labor more cheaply than her competitors can. With these odds in her favor, she was winning steadily in the race. But now, if those further privileges be ratified, her competitors will in many respects be put out of the running altogether. Moscow and Lodz, for instance, will hardly have the ghost of a chance. As Russia, not being an industrial nation, had but little to lose by compliance with Japan's demand, while probably she stood to gain considerably, her plenipotentiaries consented.

But the consent was contingent, not absolute. For it would be inconsistent with Russia's dignity were she to contract herself out of rights which her competitors and peers, Great Britain, the United States, Germany and France, continue to enjoy. And for that reason she stipulated that her acquiescence shall not have any practical consequences unless and until those other Powers also assent. Russia owed it to her dignity to make this proviso. Now, what the Mikado's representatives have in view is to induce all the great commercial nations of the world to contract themselves in a similar manner out of those same privileges for the behoof of Japan, Russia being asked to forego them before the others solely because she happened to be negotiating a commercial treaty earlier than they. And the Japanese are so sure of obtaining their end within the next five years that they have agreed that Russia's renunciation shall not take effect until

the other Powers have followed her example. But, as soon as their new commercial treaties with Japan are under discussion, this stipulation will be insisted on as an essential feature of them. And only if it be embodied in the future commercial treaties will Russia be asked to honor her cheque written nearly five years in advance.

Put into concrete shape, then, the innovation means that Japan would fain cultivate much closer commercial relations with the peoples of the Far East—of whom she among all great nations deems herself the only neighbor—than shall be permissible to the other Powers. For these the extreme Orient shall, indeed, keep open its door, but for Japan its portals. According to the new formula, the “special commercial relations” which Nippon may entertain with Siam, China, Corea and Indo-China as with next-door neighbors, and the special commercial concessions which may emanate from these relations, shall not be liable to be claimed by other Powers under the most-favored-nation clause. All other peoples shall be expressly excepted, with their own consent.

This whole story, which may be pieced together from the official protocols of the Conference now printed in St. Petersburg, is on all fours with the arrangement once come to between Japan and the United States, prior to the abolition of consular jurisdiction in the Mikado’s dominions. The American Government then agreed that its citizens resident in the Mikado’s realm should be subject to Japanese laws and amenable to Japanese tribunals, if other nations would also consent to have their subjects thus treated. And in this action America was alone, no other Power following suit. Consequently, the agreement did not come into force until years after, when Great Britain and the other Great Powers had likewise assented to the abolition of consular jurisdiction. America, however, had by her example exercised a considerable moral pressure upon the other States, for which Japan showed herself duly grateful. Russia acting in a similar spirit to-day is establishing a strong claim upon Japan’s gratitude. And when at last the commercial treaties are altered in the sense indicated—assuming that Great Britain and the other Powers do eventually consent to have them modified in this way—Russia will have lost much less by renouncing the special advantages reserved by Japan than will the United States, Great Britain or Germany.

Will Japan succeed in persuading the commercial Powers of the world to give her that exceptionally advantageous position in the Far East at which she is obviously aiming? Those who lay stress upon the magnitude of the interests involved will probably answer the question by an emphatic negative. Others who bear in mind the consummate skill, the despair-proof energy and the unflagging perseverance that characterize the Japanese, and who read the future in the light of the past, will be tempted to reply affirmatively.

In Japan's designs, so far as they are revealed or foreshadowed by her attitude at the St. Petersburg Conference, there is nothing calculated to shock or surprise the onlooker. Foreign policies should be dispassionately judged according to the contemporary standard of international ethics. And the moral code of nations to-day extols one-sided nationalism and condemns altruism. Japan, therefore, has done the right thing at the right time. Certainly, it would ill become those who applauded Russia's line of action in Manchuria to cavil at Japan's enterprise in the Far East. The principle underlying the schemes of both States is identical, and international "ethics" identifies it with patriotism. The only difference is that the project of Nippon is much vaster than that of Russia, and has a better chance of being successfully carried out. The only rival who hitherto appeared formidable is now prostrate: her army is demoralized, and her navy is either at the bottom of the sea or flying the flag of Japan.

As an artichoke is eaten leaf by leaf, so a great national scheme like this is realized bit by bit. And the Japanese are persevering and methodical. As their statesmen carried out their design of abolishing consular jurisdiction, so they may gradually get the new restrictive clause introduced into the commercial treaties which must be renewed in a few years. It is natural to begin with Corea and Great Britain. What objection, for instance, can Sir Edward Grey raise to Japan's enjoying exceptional privileges in Corea? Obviously none, for the British look upon the Hermit Kingdom as part of Greater Japan. In like manner, the United States Government may, it is assumed, easily be won over. No well-informed Russian would be surprised to learn that Mr. Taft, during his recent visit to the Tsar's realm, had heard the subject broached by competent observers and that he had displayed no tokens of concern.

PARIS, January, 1908.

I PROPOSE to record the doings of the Deputies since the beginning of the session seven or eight weeks ago: for the present, there is no other history of France. They have managed to despatch the Budget in this comparatively brief space of time. In countries where the chief business of Parliament is to sanction the taxes, such haste might appear excessive, but the Chamber needs time for its long-contemplated reforms.

The Budget as sent up to the Senate is not absolutely sincere. For several years—in spite of occasional pleasant surprises like a surplus of two hundred millions of francs in the receipts, this year—the Chamber has not succeeded in balancing the Budget, and all it has done has availed only to disguise the deficit. Last year the dodge was to put down to the Budget in hand the proceeds accruing to the Treasury from the Rothschild and a few other large successions, though the duty did not fall due for another twelve months. This year, the Minister of Finance bethought himself of the no less childish method of redistributing between three or four future Budgets twenty-eight million francs to be paid to pensioned State servants, or employed as bounties to the merchant shipping, a heavy burden on French finance. This device was adopted by a large majority who know very well that the average Frenchman invariably skips the portions of his paper devoted to pure finance or to foreign politics. Nor did the Chamber entertain any doubt of the welcome it would receive from the Senate. The senatorial *rapporteur* is M. Poincaré, a man of exceptional ability and absolute integrity, who gave up office as Minister of Finance in the last Cabinet, because he saw that there was no escape from financial shifts if the Chamber were to redeem its promise of an Old Age Pension fund. The Chamber does not much mind a rebuke from the Senate on the subject of finance—it matters very little: the country knows nothing of it, and the second reading of the Budget seldom occupies more than four afternoons, after which the subject is never mentioned. Another measure, popular or, in the language of politicians, *electoral* and economical, has been taken, which the Senate will not find quite so easy to throw out. Three times in the ten or twelve years during which he belongs to the reserve, the French citizen is called back to the colors for periods of thirteen and twenty-eight days. The Chamber felt sure that

it would please the electorate, while lightening the Budget, by reducing the longer period to three weeks, and the shorter one to one week. The wisdom of such a step just when the two years' service must necessarily weaken the Army may be questioned. In fact, it brought about the indignant resignation of two veterans in the military Commissions, M. Mézières and M. de Freycinet, twice Minister of War. But few Deputies are strong-minded enough to seek the approbation of military experts rather than that of the laborers who send them to the Chamber. Political considerations rule military as well as religious questions, and the prospect of re-election is the chief factor that moulds our representatives' opinions.

Sums have been voted towards the much-needed revision of the *cadastre* (land assessment), preparatory to the future enactment of the Income Tax. In fact, it is impossible to determine the tax to be paid by each landowner, unless a correct estimate of the actual value of the land be obtained, and the *cadastre* is so obsolete that some land properties pay, when they change owners, the extravagant tax of a hundred and fifty per cent., whereas first-rate estates pay next to nothing because they happened to be waste when the original survey was made. Strange to say, the very wise proposal to revise the cadastral tables had been made—as I hinted above—by M. Poincaré to the last Chamber; it was considered, discussed and finally passed by both Houses; but, the necessary sums having been diverted from their proper channels by M. Poincaré's successor, the Act was not only left in abeyance, but completely forgotten.

For some little while the Chamber had flattered itself that this very useful and apparently harmless measure would save it the ordeal of the debate on the main issue. In point of fact, the revision of the *cadastre* must take place at least every three years, and what is the good of passing an Act that cannot be enforced for three years to come? This reasoning would have seemed urgent, had it not been for M. Jaurès, who pointed out that the present Chamber and present Cabinet have made the Income Tax part and parcel of their programme—that it is, therefore, their duty to pass it, and that the project will be safer if it waits as an Act than if it waits as a Bill.

With the exception of a legal spoliation, to which I will advert at the end of this letter, the Chamber has done nothing else be-

sides the ordinary routine of the Budget, and the country thinks it is too little. Unfortunately, the country is only called upon to speak its mind on its representatives one half-day in four years, and it is seldom that an event of particular significance happens so to coincide with a general election as to raise it to the dignity of a national verdict.

There is one question the examination of which will delight all parties except the monarchists of the Right, whose policy is to stand for religious liberty even though they may not care a straw for religion: I mean the revision of the Law on Secondary Education. The conduct of secondary education was until 1850 a State monopoly. After that date M. de Falloux succeeded in passing a law empowering private teachers duly qualified to open and conduct schools. This liberty had long been claimed by Catholics, who insisted that they had a right to see their children educated by masters of their own choosing. Most of these Catholic colleges were managed by priests, secular or regular, and in course of time became as numerous as the State establishments. Naturally they had not the privilege of granting diplomas and the boys were examined for the baccalaureate degree by the official boards. About twenty Colleges were in the hands of the Jesuits and, as might be expected, were mostly frequented by the sons of monarchists or of people anxious to secure for their sons a more or less aristocratic connection. These schools, of course, were antipathetic to the republicans and often denounced by the local radical committees: a great deal of the anti-clerical agitation was directed against them and their suppression in 1901 was looked upon as a triumph over the reactionaries. On the contrary, the schools conducted by the diocesan clergy had no political flag of any sort, and only aimed at turning out well-educated lads with sound religious principles. The masters who taught in them had been at first mere seminary priests; but, as years passed and the standard for the degree grew higher, they became better scholars, and, in the last twenty years, most Catholic schools could boast of a staff with an excellent University education and much broader notions than those of the ordinary parochial clergy. There was nowhere a better chance of reconciling the Church with the spirit of the times.

At various periods, there had been some talk of submitting the unofficial schools to official inspection and nobody thought this

a very serious encroachment on the liberty of teaching. Two or three Bills to that effect have been framed since 1901, the last of which, by M. Chaumié, then Minister of Education, won the approval of both Liberals and the Government. This Bill was waiting for a chance of securing the Chamber's attention when the Disestablishment of the Church brought about the state of tension which the reader cannot have forgotten. Immediately the Leaders of the Left spoke of remodelling the Chaumié project, and in fact a new *rapporteur* was named,—a perfectly unknown Radical-Socialist, M. Massé, with no experience whatever of education—and a new Commission was elected.

In July of last year, M. Massé's report was ready and its conclusions were published. They preserved the main lines of the Chaumié Bill, *i.e.*, equality of rights and charges between the free and the State establishments, but M. Massé introduced a curious exception. "The Commission," he said, "would have liked to please its President, M. F. Buisson, by excluding the clergy from the schools altogether, but it had appeared impossible to give a satisfactory legal definition of a priest, and the Commission had to be content with excluding the clergy from the direction of establishments but not from teaching." This extraordinary statement amazed the few experts who take an interest in the question. If it was impossible to find a correct definition of a priest as teacher, how was it possible to find one of a priest as manager? Anti-clericalism having nothing to do with logic, no answer was ever given.

In September the Papal Encyclical against Modernists appeared and the feeling it created dispensed M. Massé from seeking explanations. Clearly, to the Radical mind, a clergy who received and consented to act upon such an anti-scientific document *ipso facto* declared themselves unequal to the task of educating French citizens. These gentlemen did not take the trouble to observe that many—I should say most—of the so-called Modernists blamed by the Pope were professors in Catholic Colleges.

The probable consequence of this wholesale view is that M. Buisson will rise during the debates and move the complete exclusion from the schools, of the clergy, whether legally defined or not. This would take their bread from about fifteen hundred French citizens with University degrees, against whom no exception could be taken if they did not happen to be priests.

My American or English reader will not fail to ask me whether the immorality of excluding French citizens from rights open to all the French nation will not strike the majority and cause some wavering among them. The fact is that one must live in France to realize how politicians can always bring themselves to view things politically and apart from any moral consideration. Men who would not take a penny from a Rothschild will have no hesitation in robbing a whole category of citizens just to please a Minister. The instance with which I am going to conclude happened only six weeks ago and is most instructive.

The Pope's prohibiting the French Bishops against forming "*associations cultuelles*" (associations for public worship) entailed the loss of all Church property. But in some cases the property was of such a nature as to enable individual claimants to dispute the confiscation. For instance, there existed in most dioceses funds for aged priests which had at first been appropriated by the Treasury, but which the efforts of the well-known Abbé Lemire will probably succeed in transferring to municipal charities, with the charge of paying the pensions till the death of all the old priests concerned. The case I am noticing is very similar. Nothing is more frequent among Roman Catholics than the endowment of religious services for the dead. The state used to recognize these foundations, provided the capital bequeathed was invested in stocks. No Catholic *associations cultuelles* being forthcoming, the Treasury appropriated the endowments, and, as a consequence, the services were suspended. The testators' heirs no less naturally sued the Government, and, the law being glaringly in their favor, obtained satisfaction from all the Courts they applied to. Unfortunately for the heirs and for justice, it is those very judgments that the Chamber has just coolly quashed, deciding, moreover—to add insult to injury—that the claimants shall pay the legal expenses of all the cases originally decided in their favor.

No such contempt of justice had been seen in France even during the worst days of the Revolution. A jubilant Socialist judged the situation by exclaiming on giving his vote: "At last we see a real blow struck against private property!"

P.S.—The Senate has just sent the Budget back to the Chamber, after substituting for the shifts proposed by the Minister a loan of twelve million dollars.

A VERY serious question which must be dealt with effectively in Italy is that concerning the railways, especially under two aspects, both very important: (1) the bringing up of the system to modern requirements and to meet the extraordinary development of traffic in the Peninsula, and (2) the controlling of the pretensions, which are often excessive, of the railway servants.

As is known, the Italian railways were ceded, in 1885, when the finances of the State were at very low water, to private companies for a period of twenty years. The statesmen who had recourse to this measure thought they had solved the railway problem in the best interests of the State, as while freeing the Government from the heavy expenses which the construction and management of the lines implied, and securing to it at the same time a considerable participation in the dividends, they hoped that the spirit of competition between the different companies would ensure an efficient and constantly improving service. In reality, the companies merely worked the lines in their own interest, to such a point that when, in July, 1905, the State decided to take them over, it was found that the 10,000 miles of railways, forming the whole system, were practically so worn out as to require thorough renovation in every department, especially in that of the rolling stock, which was in a complete state of decay. For instance, every year 60,000 trucks had to be hired, representing a loss of twenty per cent. on what they produced. The engines were inadequate in number, antiquated in type, and in bad condition, and the passenger carriages in many cases unfit for use. Despite these facts, however, public opinion exercised such strong pressure in favor of State ownership that Parliament almost unanimously approved their being taken over, and voted in different bills \$182,000,000 to be invested in laying double tracks on all those lines the returns of which exceed a certain amount, in strengthening all the main lines, so as to be able to carry the heaviest and fastest trains, in transforming them from steam to electricity, in adapting every new installation or change to three times the present requirements to meet the constantly growing traffic, and, finally, in renewing and nearly doubling the present rolling stock. For this last item, as all the manufactories in Italy had received Government orders which would keep them busy for several years, com-

missions were given abroad for engines, and cars already built were bought, including some from America. But it is estimated that the work undertaken cannot be completed in less than ten or twelve years even with foreign aid.

The question of the men is much more serious. Although, with the passage of the lines into the control of the State, they have become public officials, they, understanding the enormous power which they can exercise through their Union, abuse it, augmenting their pretensions constantly. While the Government does not interfere in strikes, except to protect the liberty of those who wish to work, the strike of public officials is considered a crime, severely punished by the penal code. The trouble arises when, as in the Milan strike, the strikers number several thousands, and are backed by the threat of a general strike not only on the railways, but among all classes of workmen. Indeed, the situation tends to grow worse just because of the complete solidarity existing among all working-men of all classes.

The strike of 7,000 railway servants in Milan and Lombardy was, in fact, only to express sympathy with the gas employees of that town, who, by the time the railway people struck, had already settled their quarrel with their employers. When the railways were taken over by the State, the Government was, for the first time, confronted with the dilemma of either not applying to the railway strikers the punishments established, thus losing all authority and encouraging the men in their rebellion, or enforcing the law and facing a general strike. The Government was rather in favor of treating the matter with great indulgence, but conservative elements, both in the country and at Court, exercised such an influence as to make it clear that too weak an attitude would have unpleasant consequences. As a kind of compromise, therefore, sixteen of the leaders of the strike were dismissed. The railway people thought at first of answering immediately by a general strike, but this was impossible through the opposition of the Socialist leaders, who preferred inaction rather than risk the advent of a Cabinet of repression. Public opinion, however, is inclined to believe that it will be difficult to avoid the experiment of a general strike promoted by the railway people in revenge. To that end they make claims for the reduction of their work to eight hours daily, and for one day free in the week.

To realize to what extent such claims are nothing but impositions, it must be known that the Italian railway employees are among the best treated in Europe, the State securing to them a good pension, insurance against accident, free medical attendance and medicines, and additional wages for those who live or travel in malarial districts. The expenses of the Department of the Railways for the men and the administration absorb in Italy sixty per cent. of the gross returns against forty per cent. in other countries. The railway employees even considered to which alternative, in case of non-acceptance of their terms, it would be better for them to have recourse instead of to the strike—to obstructionism, that is, the too literal carrying out of the regulations, or to *sabotage*, the secret injuring of railway material. It would make little difference which of these methods should be employed, as those adopting the former would subject themselves to punishment as strikers, and any one committing *sabotage* would be liable to dismissal and to five years' imprisonment besides.

WASHINGTON, *January, 1908.*

A REPORT is current in Washington that Mr. Roosevelt has predicted that Secretary Taft will have over six hundred votes on the first ballot. The computation will not bear analysis. It assumes that the Secretary will get all the delegates from Southern States, and all those from the Far Western States, and a majority of those from New York, New England and Ohio. It is tolerably certain that Minnesota and the two Dakotas will instruct for Senator La Follette, who is also sure of his own State, Wisconsin, at least on the first ballot. It is doubtless true enough that Mr. Taft will have a larger number of votes than any other candidate on the first ballot; but it is also likely that these will fall materially short of giving him a majority, and the fact that they will be derived largely, if not mainly, from States certain to give their electoral votes to the Democratic nominee, will not tend to commend him to far-sighted politicians who want to see their party win at the ballot-box. The fact, also, that the Secretary of War cannot expect to have behind him an undivided delegation from his own State casts grave doubts on his availability. It is generally believed in Washington that, under certain circumstances, Governor Hughes could get a good deal of support

from New England, but he can hardly hope for an undivided delegation from New York, in view of the adverse position taken by President Roosevelt and the latter's adherents. The pivotal importance of the Empire State in the coming campaign is fully recognized by politicians on both sides. One has ceased to hear much talk about Vice-President Fairbanks's chance of obtaining the nomination, though he remains assured of Indiana's delegates. More is said about Speaker Cannon, but that is because the House of Representatives is full of his personal friends, and because he is known to have, beyond any other candidate with the possible exception of Senator Knox, the confidence of the Stand-Patters. Senator Knox will have Pennsylvania, but, apparently, no other State on the first ballot. He is, however, as we have intimated, the second choice of the Stand-Patters.

Until three or four weeks ago, it was generally conceded among Democratic politicians at the Federal capital that, although few of them wanted him, Mr. Bryan could probably count on obtaining a third nomination for the Presidency from the Democratic National Convention which is to be held in Denver. The spirit of resignation and despair seemed almost universal, although experience has shown that, in Democratic national conventions, owing to the two-thirds rule, it is relatively easy to defeat the most prominent candidate.

It is evidently a recognition of this fact which has caused the New York "World" to announce that it will designate sixteen candidates for the Democratic nomination, any one of whom, if selected, would be more likely to be chosen Chief Magistrate than would Mr. Bryan. This announcement, followed as it has been by successive demonstrations, has produced what may be termed a sensation in Washington. The "World" began by designating a Western candidate, John A. Johnson of Minnesota, who was chosen Governor by a small majority in 1904, when Mr. Roosevelt swept the State for President by a plurality of over 160,000. In 1906, Mr. Johnson beat his Republican competitor for the Governorship by more than 76,000. An Eastern candidate proposed by the "World" is Judge Gray of Delaware. Unquestionably his own State will send a Gray delegation to Denver, and his nomination would appeal eloquently to the Democrats of Pennsylvania.

Of all the candidates, however, thus far proposed by the

"World" the most promising is Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton University. As a native of Virginia, who practised law and married in Georgia, he would be the first Southern man nominated for the Presidency by a National Convention since James K. Polk of Tennessee. As such, he would almost certainly carry such States as Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, States that in recent years have once or oftener been detached from the Democratic column. As a man who for many years has been a professor in Northern institutions of learning, and who for some six years has been President of Princeton, he would powerfully commend himself to the Northern section of the Union, and beyond a doubt would carry the States of New Jersey and New York. There is no reason, either, why Woodrow Wilson, as a tariff revisionist, should not run well in Massachusetts, which elected a Democrat, Mr. Douglas, Governor in the Presidential year of 1904, and in Ohio, which also elected a Democratic Governor in 1905.

There is no doubt that a large appropriation for coast and insular fortifications will be requested at the present session of Congress, and the request seems likely to be granted, owing to the existence of a good deal of disquietude concerning the defenceless condition of our possessions in or bordering upon the Pacific Ocean. It also begins to look probable that the bill increasing the pay of officers and men in both the army and the navy will become a law. A large increase in the number of battle-ships is demanded by public opinion, in view of the fact that we require a powerful fleet in both the Atlantic and the Pacific, and in consideration also of another fact, that Germany's revised naval programme provides for the addition to her navy of three first-class battle-ships yearly, up to and including 1911. If, now, the American Congress should enact that no fewer than *four* first-class battle-ships shall be laid down by us annually, up to and including the year last named, we should soon have a mightier fleet in the Atlantic than we have just sent to the Pacific, and we could maintain it at its full fighting strength, if we should assume that the life of a modern battle-ship is only about twenty years, after which it becomes obsolete, and if we should, consequently, arrange to lay down the keels of two battle-ships a year after 1911. In that case, we should always remain a maritime power second in warlike capacity to Great Britain alone.